



UNITED
NATIONS



**Convention to Combat
Desertification**

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/CRIC(5)/5
20 December 2006

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION
Fifth session
Buenos Aires, 12-21 March 2007
Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND OF
ITS INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22,
PARAGRAPH 2 (a) AND (b), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION,
AS WELL AS DECISION 1/COP.5, PARAGRAPH 10**

**REVIEW OF THE REPORTS BY DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES
ON MEASURES TAKEN TO ASSIST IN THE PREPARATION AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES OF AFFECTED
COUNTRY PARTIES OF REGIONS OTHER THAN AFRICA,
INCLUDING INFORMATION ON FINANCIAL RESOURCES THEY
HAVE PROVIDED, OR ARE PROVIDING, UNDER THE CONVENTION**

Note by the secretariat

**Synthesis and preliminary analysis of the information contained
in the reports submitted by the developed countries**

Summary

1. Fifteen developed country Parties transmitted to the secretariat their reports on measures taken to assist the affected country Parties in the regions of Asia, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe to prepare and put into effect action programmes under the Convention to Combat Desertification. These reports are all updated versions of the previous reports on these regions. As a rule they continue to be accompanied by numerous detailed lists of projects of all kinds related to the environment, sustainable development and desertification control. All 15 reports were received after the deadline stipulated by the secretariat; they are reviewed in this synthesis and preliminary analysis. Reports received after 17 November 2006 have not been included, but are available on the secretariat's website (<http://www.unccd.int>). Document ICCD/CRIC(5)/MISC.4 contains a compilation of the executive summaries.
2. The developed country Parties confirm their support for the affected country Parties in the regions of Asia, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe within the framework of their policies for cooperation and official development assistance. The affected countries in Asia have more projects than the countries in the regions other than the Africa region. Some countries in the Asia region and the Latin America region which have reached a high level of development benefit from high-level scientific cooperation, and the partnership agreements mentioned with these countries are preludes to trade agreements.
3. These reports generally show that projects for desertification control, sustainable management of natural resources and development are much more numerous and more substantial than projects strictly involving the implementation of the Convention. References to the national action programmes (NAPs), subregional action programmes (SRAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs) are rare, no doubt because the latter have already been adopted and are beginning to be implemented. There are no references to the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). Projects related to the three main environmental conventions are more frequent than in previous reports.
4. The tendency for projects to be implemented by non-governmental organizations, noted in previous reports, has continued. Efforts to support scientific research have also continued. The priority thematic sectors are the sustainable management of natural resources and the strengthening of civil society.
5. In some reports references may be found to projects which are not strictly related to desertification control, either because they are being implemented in humid countries which are unlikely to experience desertification or because they relate to subject areas which are a priori not closely linked to desertification.
6. The developed countries continue to point out that desertification control projects should be integrated into national development strategies and should be compatible with the Millennium Development Goals.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. In keeping with article 22, paragraphs 2 (a) and (b), and article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP), in particular decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, developed country Parties are required to report, through the Convention secretariat, on measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, under the Convention.
2. In decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, the COP requested the Parties to submit their reports to the secretariat at least six months prior to the session at which they were to be reviewed, and requested the secretariat to compile the summaries of reports submitted and to establish a synthesis of the reports, emphasizing trends in the implementation of the Convention. These communications are drawn up in accordance with the presentation and contents set out in paragraph 10 (c) of decision 11/COP.1.
3. In its decision 1/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties set up a Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). In decision 9/COP.7, the COP decided that the programme of work of the fifth session of the CRIC should include a review of the implementation of the Convention in the affected country Parties in regions other than the Africa region, structured around the main thematic issues mentioned in decision 1/COP.5. At its fifth session, the CRIC was also to review the progress made in the implementation of the Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the Convention obligations that appear in decision 8/COP.4.
4. As a result of the establishment of the CRIC and the adoption of the Declaration (decision 8/COP.4), a number of substantive changes were made in the way reports were prepared. Apart from the format for the presentation of reports, set out in decision 11/COP.1, the Committee took account of seven key thematic topics for the purposes of the first general review of the implementation of the Convention at its first session. These topics, to which attention was drawn for the establishment of the reports for the fifth session, are as follows:
 - (a) Participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations;
 - (b) Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements;
 - (c) Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusion of partnership agreements;
 - (d) Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies;
 - (e) Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and the establishment of early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought;

- (f) Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment;
- (g) Access by affected country Parties to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.

5. In addition to these seven key thematic topics, the developed country Parties were invited, in decision 4/COP.6, to provide information on their activities in the following specific thematic and sectoral areas, recommended in decision 8/COP.4:

- (a) Sustainable land use management in the affected countries;
- (b) Sustainable use and management of rangelands;
- (c) Development of sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems;
- (d) Development of new and renewable energy sources;
- (e) Launching of reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensification of soil conservation programmes;
- (f) Development of early warning systems for food security and drought forecasting;
- (g) Desertification monitoring and assessment.

6. The developed country Parties were also invited to provide information concerning decisions 1/COP.6, 4/COP.6 and 5/COP.6. In its decision 1/COP.6, the COP indicated that in their reports developed country Parties should mention activities related to the strengthening of bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes for implementing the Convention, the identification of *chefs de file*, support for South-South and North-South cooperation, the promotion of small and medium-sized projects, support for the rehabilitation of ecosystems degraded by refugee influxes, consideration for gender-sensitive capacity-building measures, the promotion of capacity-building measures and participatory processes in the field of natural resources management, the launch of awareness campaigns in developed country Parties, improved consideration of Convention objectives in support strategies implemented by developed country Parties and consultations with the Global Mechanism.

7. Pursuant to decision 10/COP.4, Parties were encouraged to include information in their reports on scientific and technical activities to combat desertification and on progress achieved in the implementation of scientific and technical activities.

8. Developed country Parties which had not yet submitted their reports were invited to submit a general report covering the period since their ratification of or accession to the Convention. Those which had already submitted a report were invited to send the secretariat updated information concerning their activities. It was recommended that the updated information should focus on support activities for affected country Parties in regions other than Africa (in keeping with decision 9/COP.6).

II. REPORTS RECEIVED FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

9. Decision 11/COP.1 lays down that reports should reach the UNCCD secretariat at least six months prior to the session at which they are to be reviewed. Decision 10/COP.7 stipulated that the fifth session of the CRIC would be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in September 2006. On 16 January 2006 the secretariat sent the developed country Parties a letter reminding them of the process for the preparation of the third cycle of reports. An explanatory note for the developed countries concerning the preparation of national reports, dated 23 December 2005 (ICCD/CRIC(5)/INF.4) was placed on the UNCCD website. A note verbale dated 6 March 2006 was sent to the countries to remind them that the reports are due six months before the date of the CRIC. A further note verbale was then sent to the developed country Parties on 5 May 2006, requesting them to provide their reports before 31 May 2006. By 31 May only two reports had been received by the secretariat. Owing to the low number of reports received by the date when the regional meetings were held (July 2006), it was not possible to prepare a synthesis of the reports for presentation to those meetings. This synthesis and preliminary analysis covers all the reports received by 17 November 2006. The reports received after that date are not included in this synthesis and preliminary analysis, but they are available on the secretariat's website (<http://www.unccd.int>). Document ICCD/CRIC(5)/MISC.4 contains a compilation of the executive summaries.

10. At the time this document was drawn up, the reports of the following 15 countries had been received: Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States.

11. The synthesis of these reports appears in the next chapter, using a plan which follows the recommendations set out in the explanatory note for the developed countries: an Asia section, then a Latin America and the Caribbean section, and lastly a Central and Eastern Europe section. Each section is subdivided into three subsections, devoted to consultative processes and partnership agreements, measures taken to assist the elaboration and implementation of action programmes at all levels - including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, both bilaterally and multilaterally, and consultation of the Global Mechanism - and all other activities related to desertification control. This last subsection takes up the specific thematic and sectoral areas mentioned in decision 8/COP.4 and listed in paragraph 4 above, indicating the scientific and technical activities referred to in paragraph 5 and the key thematic activities set out in decision 1/COP.6 referred to in paragraph 6 above, as well as all other activities related to decisions 1/COP.6 and 4/COP.6.

III. SYNTHESIS OF INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE REPORTS FROM THE DEVELOPED COUNTRY PARTIES

A. Asia

12. It will be noted that the 15 reports received mention the implementation of the Convention in Asia. The countries in this region most frequently referred to are China, India, Pakistan, all the countries of Central Asia; some countries in Western Asia, including Lebanon and Palestine, then the countries of South-East Asia, in particular Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia.

1. Consultative processes and partnership agreements

13. Most of the countries express their support for consultative processes and partnership agreements in their reports. The partnership agreements directly underpin stakeholder involvement in the formulation of desertification control policies, projects and programmes and support the organization of seminars, working groups and networks for exchanges and information on the implementation of the Convention and desertification control. They also support the activities of local groups of crop farmers and livestock breeders, women and other groups to promote integrated local development. The ultimate objective is decentralization through the strengthening of civil society, on the one hand, and the gathering of traditional knowledge, access to know-how, awareness-raising and training on the other. However, in the reports, this general direct support is not followed by concrete examples of specific actions in support of consultative processes in the affected country Parties. Nevertheless, the desertification control activities indicated in the reports generally include actions which indirectly help to support the consultative processes.

14. Other indirect support for consultative processes is channelled through non-governmental organizations. The reports indicate that this support is provided either by the agencies of developed country Parties via Asian non-governmental organizations, or by the agencies of developed country Parties via their own non-governmental organizations, which then conclude partnership agreements with local Asian non-governmental organizations. Two reports give very detailed lists of projects run by non-governmental organizations, but these lists give only vague indications of the precise content of the projects in question. Two reports quote the amounts of government aid to non-governmental organizations as well as funds originating from other sources: churches, public campaigns, foundations, corporate, personal, charitable or religious donations.

15. Two reports strongly emphasize that the term “partnership agreement” covers only the official State-to-State relations which make the cooperation possible. These reports give lists of the affected Asian country Parties which benefit from official support that passes through the usual bilateral cooperation channels that are generally described in the reports.

16. The developed country Parties are also involved through multilateral organizations, including those of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations economic and social commissions for western Asia and for Asia and the Pacific (ESCWA and ESCAP), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. They also work with the international agricultural research institutes of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), such as the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). Two developed countries mention their support for subregional partnership agreements, such as those in central Asia.

2. Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, bilaterally and multilaterally

17. The reports do not mention support specifically intended for the preparation and implementation of national action programmes (NAPs). Two countries are providing support for

subregional efforts in Central Asia to set up a subregional action programme (SRAP) known as the Central Asian Countries Initiative on Land Management (CACILM), with the support of the Global Mechanism and the Global Environment Facility; it has annual funds of about US\$ 70 million.

18. The reports contain information on the diversity of the financial resources provided by the developed countries. These resources are for the most part allocated to development projects in the sectors of agriculture, livestock-raising, water; strengthening of civil society; training; scientific and technical research; information. The announced annual budgets of these projects range from a few million United States dollars to several tens of millions of United States dollars. As a guide, mention might be made of the following annual amounts devoted specifically to desertification control: Belgium: 4 million euros; Canada: no figure indicated; Czech Republic: 153 million koruny; France: 3.6 million euros; Finland: 0.7 million euros; Germany: 36.5 million euros; Italy: 15 million euros; Japan: no figure indicated; Netherlands: 20 million euros (not including funds committed by non-governmental organizations); Spain: between 10 and 14 million euros depending on the year; Switzerland: 14.2 million United States dollars; United Kingdom: 3.8 million United States dollars bilaterally and 76 million United States dollars multilaterally for Asia and Latin America as a whole; United States: 18.25 million United States dollars (12 of these for Lebanon).

19. Most of the countries mention, sometimes with a great deal of detail, their internal arrangements as regards cooperation and coordination of their desertification control activities. They describe their priorities as well as the beneficiary countries and indicate the principal public and private stakeholders involved in the developed countries, namely: Asian development agencies and consultancies which carry out rural development projects that include desertification control activities, scientific and university institutions working on such issues as desertification monitoring, improving erosion control methods, water management, geographical information systems and remote sensing, issues relating to land and participatory management of natural resources, and non-governmental organizations.

3. Other activities relevant to desertification control

20. As far as measures to rehabilitate degraded land are concerned, most reports express an interest but list very few operations specifically devoted to this purpose. Water and soil conservation issues are generally integrated into broader operations in the fields of agricultural and livestock development and land management. The reports describe projects in China, Pakistan, India, the Central Asian republics and the Middle East. One report mentions a large regional scientific programme to combat erosion and land degradation in South-East Asia. Over half the projects mentioned in the reports can be included in this fairly broad category of sustainable rural development projects.

21. Activities connected with early warning systems and the monitoring and assessment of drought and desertification are mentioned in two reports. One refers to support for dust monitoring in China. The other cites a synoptic report on desertification monitoring in China, Kazakhstan and Pakistan. The affected countries in Asia seem to have their own systems which fit into the global systems such as the global observing systems coordinated by the United Nations agencies and the major national space agencies working through the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS).

22. Almost all the reports contain descriptions of many activities in the field of sustainable land use management, water management and rangeland management, relating to the most affected countries in Asia: China, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Central Asian republics and Middle East. Activities related to land degradation account for roughly a quarter of the projects mentioned in the reports.
23. Activities relating to reforestation/afforestation are mentioned in four reports, which principally cite China as a beneficiary country, Mongolia, Viet Nam and Afghanistan (Kabul green belt and afforestation).
24. Only two reports cite two operations relating to new and renewable energies: desalination and solar energy and biogas.
25. Three reports mention synergy between conventions: one concerns issues of biodiversity and genetic resources related to drought as well as conservation agriculture systems including cover cropping in Cambodia; another concerns a large system of training on synergies in China; a third deals with the issue of adaptation to climate changes in the Bay of Bengal and adaptation to tsunamis.
26. Almost all the reports cite scientific cooperation in all the subject areas related to desertification, mentioning the various partnerships between scientific institutions in the North and those in the South as well as issues of training of researchers. However, it should be pointed out that none of them refers to the recommendations of the Convention's CST. It may be estimated that about a quarter of the financial resources referred to in the reports relate to scientific activities.
27. Four reports set out the general policies relating to support for global natural resource management projects, including the issues of gender, youth and capacity-building, as well as support for the formulation of environmental policies which can include desertification control, giving examples of projects in certain affected countries in Asia.

B. Latin America and the Caribbean

28. It will be noted that 14 of the reports which have been received deal with the implementation of the Convention in Latin America and the Caribbean. The countries in this region which are cited most frequently are, on the one hand, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Paraguay, and on the other certain Andean countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru) and lastly certain countries in the Caribbean zone (El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua).

1. Consultative processes and partnership agreements

29. The sections on Latin America and the Caribbean in the reports that have been received contain the same policy statements regarding support for participatory processes and partnership agreements as the sections on Asia. That said, very few countries mention any direct support for consultative processes and partnership agreements. The information contained in the reports which do cover the subject refer to efforts undertaken to strengthen cooperation in the Caribbean subregion as part of the implementation of the Convention in the form of cross-border activities between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Many activities to raise awareness of desertification

and of the Convention are reported in three countries: Brazil, Guatemala and Nicaragua. These activities are conducted by non-governmental organizations with support from the embassies of the developed countries. One country is engaged in efforts to bring the Andean countries closer together. As in the case of Asia, actions to support consultative processes are indirect actions carried out within rural development projects.

30. All the reports indicate that indirect support for consultative processes is channelled through non-governmental organizations. It is provided either by the agencies of developed country Parties via non-governmental organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, or by the agencies of developed country Parties via their own non-governmental organizations, which then conclude partnership agreements with local non-governmental organizations. Two reports give very detailed lists of projects run by non-governmental organizations, but these lists give only vague indications of the precise content of the projects in question. Two reports quote the amounts of government aid to non-governmental organizations as well as funds originating from other sources: churches, public campaigns, foundations, corporate, personal, charitable or religious donations.

31. Some reports strongly emphasize that the term “partnership agreement” covers only the official State-to-State relations which make the cooperation possible. These reports give lists of the affected country Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean which benefit from official support that passes through the usual bilateral cooperation channels that are generally described in the reports.

32. The developed country Parties are also involved through multilateral organizations, including those of the United Nations system, such as UNDP, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. They also work with the international agricultural research institutes of the CGIAR such as ICRISAT, the International Potato Centre (CIP) and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT).

2. Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, bilaterally and multilaterally

33. None of the reports that have been received refers to direct action in support of the process of preparation and implementation of NAPs and SRAPs, with the exception of the cross-border project referred to in paragraph 29. One developed country mentions that it is providing indirect support to this process in Brazil and Nicaragua by recommending the integration of NAPs in national environmental policies and their coordination with the plans linked to the other environmental conventions.

34. As in Asia, the reports contain information on the diversity of the financial resources provided by the developed countries. These resources are for the most part allocated to development projects in the same sectors, namely agriculture, livestock-raising, water, strengthening of civil society, training, scientific and technical research and information. Information on the financial resources allocated annually to Latin America and the Caribbean appears in almost all the reports. Mention might be made of Belgium: 4 million euros;

Czech Republic: 6 million koruny; France: 6.8 million euros; Germany: 33 million euros; Italy: 0.85 million euros; Netherlands: 15 million euros (not including funds committed by non-governmental organizations); Switzerland: 5.2 million United States dollars; United States: 5.7 million United States dollars.

3. Other activities relevant to desertification control

35. All the reports received refer to a wide range of support for operations involving sustainable development, natural resources management and efforts to combat desertification and land degradation in virtually all countries of the region. Attention is drawn to numerous regional coordination activities: these include measures to develop the mountainous regions of the Andean countries and coordination activities in such areas as Central America, relating to methodological aspects and meteorological systems, supported by the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The projects described in the reports fall into two categories. First, highly technical projects focusing on sustainable rural development, development on sloping land and erosion control, management of water resources, forest protection and forest management, and agroforestry; second, more specific and innovative projects which link the aspects of desertification control with those of climate change: carbon sequestration in Paraguay and conservation agriculture in Brazil.

36. Four reports briefly describe decentralization projects and projects to strengthen the role of civil society and popularize the use of technologies. Mention is also made of efforts relating to scientific research, in particular in the CGIAR international agricultural research institutions such as CIAT and CIP. Lastly, two reports (Canada and the United States) refer to very specific projects such as those promoting market access and the strengthening of food security.

C. Central and Eastern Europe

37. It is noteworthy that only eight reports that have been received cover the implementation of the Convention in Central and Eastern Europe, and do so very briefly.

1. Consultative processes and partnership agreements

38. Only one report received deals with Central and Eastern Europe, mentioning an activity relating to partnership agreements: subregional efforts conducted by the Višegrad Group.

2. Measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, bilaterally and multilaterally

39. None of the reports received mentions activities relating to NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs. The information provided by the reports on the financial sums committed in Central and Eastern Europe are as follows: Czech Republic: 60 million koruny; Germany: 0.25 million euros; Italy: 3.8 million euros; United Kingdom: no amount indicated; United States: 3 million United States dollars.

3. Other activities relevant to desertification control

40. Only three reports mention operations relating to desertification control. A first report indicates cross-border cooperation in water management between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (value: US\$ 1.5 million). It also refers to an agricultural privatization operation in Ukraine, which it says should encourage better management of natural resources and hence enhance desertification control efforts. Another report provides detailed information on many cases of cooperation in scientific and training fields. A third report describes many cooperative activities among a number of countries in such areas as training of young people, training in the three conventions and sustainable land management.

IV. GENERAL TRENDS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

A. Trends in consultative processes and partnership agreements

41. The developed country Parties all reaffirm, and for all regions, their fundamental support for consultative processes and partnership agreements. They support all efforts to promote decentralization and to strengthen civil society, whether directly through activities specially geared towards this goal, or (this being the most frequent case) indirectly, by supporting development operations which have a popular participation component. However, there are many fewer direct activities than indirect activities. One trend which can be observed in all regions is for the number of activities by development-oriented non-governmental organizations to increase. This applies equally to development-oriented non-governmental organizations in the developed countries and those in the affected countries. This increase reflects the priority given to strengthening civil society. The activities carried out by non-governmental organizations from the developed country Parties continue to be coordinated by their embassies in the affected countries. However, support for partnership agreements specifically related to the Convention remains sparse. Moreover, what is covered by a "partnership agreement" remains unclear. In some cases, a "partnership agreement" is defined as any bilateral agreement between a developed country Party and an affected country.

42. The nature of desertification as both global and local is reaffirmed and is reflected both in the development of very localized actions and others on a wider - subregional or regional - scale. If they are to take place in ideal conditions, subregional and regional actions require partnership agreements which have been concluded through the existing subregional and regional organizations in Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean. The role of these organizations is thus reaffirmed. The policy priorities of the partnership agreements in terms of the environment are clearly indicated, but for certain developed countries, desertification control does not appear to be a priority.

B. Trends in measures taken to assist in the preparation and implementation of action programmes

43. The developed country Parties confirm their fundamental interest in NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs, with regard both to their preparation and to their implementation. However, they do not refer to any direct support for the national action programmes. The sole reference is to support for a subregional programme in Asia and a cross-border programme in the Caribbean region.

44. The countries no longer mention that they are “*chefs de file*”. The developed country Parties continue to reiterate their procedures for bilateral cooperation: all cooperation, in any area, must be triggered by a request from a competent authority of the requesting country. They also point out that NAPs (and efforts to combat desertification in general) must be closely linked with national development strategies and the resulting plans and programmes. This trend, which had already been set out in the previous reports, is confirmed, and this is so for all the Convention regions. Moreover, the need to link national desertification control programmes with the Millennium Development Goals, and particularly goals 1 and 7, remains a major recommendation.

C. Trends in other desertification control activities

45. The description of “other desertification control activities” continues to occupy a dominant place in the content of the reports. These activities are always subdivided into two major groups, whose content remains the same as in the previous reports. The first group covers those which may be described as “thematic”, relating to desertification monitoring, sustainable exploitation of natural resources, reforestation, upgrading of rangeland, harnessing of water resources for agriculture, early warning systems and the search for sustainable management methods. The second group includes activities relating to the involvement of local populations in decision-making, decentralization and the organization of civil society, as well as the strengthening of certain groups such as women, crop farmers and livestock breeders. Similarly, there are still no marked differences between the regions of Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean as regards the distribution of these activities.

46. Several major priority objectives are common to all regions: water, efforts to control erosion and land degradation, improvement of crop-farming and stock-raising systems, pastureland and forests, agroforestry and conservation agriculture, and desertification monitoring. The general trend is for support for fairly technical projects; little mention is yet made of such macroeconomic goals as stable agricultural commodity prices or the development of economic activities other than crop-farming and stock-raising. The issue of privatization of agriculture in Central Europe remains on the table, as private ownership is supposed to foster better land management.

47. Two other increasingly obvious trends should be added: the first relates to increased support by the developed countries for training activities, local and national capacity-building and the supply of know-how and technology; the second relates to strengthening of support for scientific research by the developed countries themselves and that of the affected countries. This research relates in particular to the aspects of drought and desertification monitoring and the aspects of sustainable management of natural resources: water, soil, plants. Other priority areas of action are infrastructure, health care, efforts to combat pollution, adaptation to climate change and flood warnings.

D. Other trends

48. The organization and internal workings of cooperation on the part of the developed countries continue to be described in considerable detail. The countries indicate how their cooperation is effected and by whom, how it is coordinated between the various ministries and

embassies, the competent national bodies in the area of desertification control, and in particular the scientific and training institutions. The need to provide support for cooperation in the field by non-governmental organizations, and to secure progress in human rights and in equality between men and women, also remains a major concern.

49. Efforts to combat desertification remain a priority, but on the condition that they are integrated into national strategies which link sustainable development, poverty alleviation and desertification control. In the development activities and research activities linked to desertification, some of them relate to the humid zones of the Asian and Latin American regions.

50. Lastly, the trend for many desertification control activities to be carried out as a part of multilateral cooperation, including cooperation conducted by United Nations organizations and programmes, by the CGIAR centres and by regional scientific and technical centres, has become established.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions on the organization and approach of the reports

51. As far as the organization of the reports is concerned, none of them follow the recommended structure, and one report even states that this structure is very hard to follow. The reports, which range in size from a few pages to over 40 pages, are indeed updated versions covering the activities of the developed country Parties in 2002-2005 to help the affected country Parties in the regions other than the Africa region. In some cases, information is also supplied on future projects or efforts pursued in the context of the United Nations Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006.

52. The financial resources allocated for the implementation of the Convention and for desertification control continue to be reported in an uneven manner and in a range of currencies, and are therefore hard to compare. They are not indicated in accordance with the plan recommended by the secretariat. Some of them refer to the markers devised by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In some reports, the totals are annual and cited explicitly; others provide only overall totals spread over several years; lastly, some reports give no figures at all. Amounts cited by source of funding and operators are indicated in two reports. It is not always possible to understand the situation from the project titles mentioned. Notwithstanding such disparities, desertification control efforts may be considered to be continuing at the same level and even increasing in some cases. The financial efforts being made for Asia seem to be greater than those for Latin America, which in turn are greater than those for Central and Eastern Europe. Lastly, information on Central and Eastern Europe remains scant.

53. The developed countries always describe the details and aims of their cooperation. Most of them place much greater emphasis on their cooperation philosophy, strategy and policy, while few give detailed information on specific activities, either in the main text of the report or in annexes. The task of synthesis is hampered by this lack of overall consistency, which may stem from the fact that the developed countries are at particular pains to explain why they are cooperating, why they are concerned about desertification and with whom they are cooperating.

54. Lastly, the successive recommendations of the Conferences of the Parties, as summarized in the explanatory note, do not seem to be always fully understood in the same way by the developed country Parties, as they contain redundant elements. Particular mention might be made of the repetitions which stem from certain decisions, notably decision 8/COP.4, which concerns inter alia the establishment of early warning systems, drought and desertification monitoring, the development of early warning systems for food security and desertification surveillance and monitoring. These four issues could certainly be regrouped. Is it not time to rethink the structure of the reports in a way which will comply with the successive COP decisions?

55. Of the 15 reports received, all deal with the Asia region, 14 deal with the Latin America and Caribbean region, while only 8 deal with Central and Eastern Europe, 2 of them in detail.

B. Conclusions on the analysis of the consultative processes, partnerships, measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and other measures

56. The basic philosophy underlying cooperation between the developed countries and the affected countries is much the same in all the regions. The activities they support tend to relate to the same issues, and the only observable differences are due to their different biophysical circumstances. Some countries in the Asia region and the Latin America region which have reached a high level of development benefit from high-level scientific cooperation, and the partnership agreements mentioned with these countries are the prelude to trade agreements.

57. The role of non-governmental organizations and international solidarity organizations has continued to grow, particularly in efforts to strengthen civil society and boost the involvement of local populations in the taking of decisions on desertification control projects which concern them. This growing role gives rise to profound changes in the way in which official development assistance is provided. But these changes have been only partially described, and there is no typology of these non-governmental organizations and international solidarity organizations. There is also a lack of precise references to organizations of crop and livestock farmers. It would seem to be interesting to pinpoint what exactly is meant by the term “partnership agreement”, which covers both simple agreements between two non-governmental organizations and international agreements between countries.

58. Increased efforts in the area of scientific research may be observed in all regions, together with internal coordination efforts in some developed countries and a European attempt to form a network known as the European DesertNet. There would seem to be a serious need to better understand and better explain what desertification is and in what way this process is global in nature and ultimately concerns all countries. There is also a need for the developed country Parties to find new arguments in favour of investment in arid zones. Has the time not come to take stock of the effectiveness and relevance of scientific work and the use of the results of such work by those involved in desertification control? In addition, the reports show that research on the social and economic aspects of desertification is rare.

59. Some developed countries would like the Convention to contain “quantitative obligations” in addition to qualitative obligations (the reporting process). It also seems that there is a need for further clarification of the different roles of the Convention institutions.

60. In addition to the information on flows of official assistance, it would be helpful to have more information on decentralized cooperation, the use of migrants' funds and private capital flows, insofar as these sources are or would be useful in efforts to combat desertification.

C. Conclusions on relations among the three United Nations environmental conventions and on issues concerning the Committee on Science and Technology

61. Measures taken to improve the knowledge and operation of ecosystems, which are beneficial to the three main United Nations environmental conventions, are the focus of some interesting scientific cooperation, which should be boosted. Operations involving afforestation and the popularization of cover-cropping techniques in Asia and Latin America are explicitly mentioned as useful to the three conventions. Training exercises based on the three conventions should be replicated along the lines followed in China.

62. The recommendations made by the Committee on Science and Technology are not always applied.

D. Overall conclusions

63. The third reporting process in the Asia, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe regions gives a reasonably good overview of the activities by developed countries to assist affected country Parties. It shows that efforts by developed countries to promote desertification control are continuing. Reference is no longer made to NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs, no doubt because the plans have been adopted and implemented.

64. Efforts to ensure that desertification control falls within broader strategic frameworks such as the campaign against poverty, sustainable development, the strengthening of civil society and decentralization should continue.

65. The considerable financial effort made by the developed countries enhances the legitimacy of the Convention in the political dialogue among countries. This should give it a clear comparative advantage in creating synergies, in particular among the three conventions, in the sustainable management of natural resources.

66. The present risk is that desertification control efforts in the strict sense will still not be assigned genuine priority, no doubt because of the lack of visibility of the consequences generated by this process. This possible failure to figure among the highest priorities may also stem from an over-broad notion of the term of desertification itself.

67. The important role allocated to scientific research in developed countries and to international scientific cooperation is linked to the fact that desertification and the associated processes are now perceived as global, cross-border phenomena. These phenomena necessitate better knowledge, closer monitoring and greater subregional and regional efforts to ensure that they are viewed in a more harmonized way and to improve the methods employed to combat desertification.

68. The developed country Parties refer to the Millennium Development Goals and the Plan of Action adopted at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002; they confirm their commitment to these goals and express a resolve to cooperate within that framework.

69. Many ongoing development projects being carried out in cooperation between the emerging countries in these regions and the developed country Parties are sister projects of trade agreements which have to do with strategies for international relations based on increasing flows of goods and capital.

Annex

**LIST OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHOSE REPORTS
ARE INCLUDED IN THE SYNTHESIS**

	<u>Submitted on</u>
Belgium	30 June 2006
Canada	4 July 2006
Czech Republic	15 May 2006
Denmark	31 August 2006
Finland	21 July 2006
France	16 June 2006
Germany	6 June 2006
Italy	27 July 2006
Japan	17 November 2006
Netherlands	29 June 2006
Poland	18 August 2006
Spain	7 July 2006
Switzerland	20 June 2006
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	5 June 2006
United States of America	11 July 2006
